

Controversial Journal

Has Reopened in Africa

Transition Magazine Published in Ghana
After Suppression in Uganda

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(Times Staff Writer)

NAIROBI, Kenya—Celebrated and controversial, Transition Magazine has reappeared, after lying dormant for almost three years in one of Africa's most flagrant cases of press suppression.

In a recent interview, Editor Rajat Neogy said the first issue of his revived magazine, now published in Ghana, had sold out its 15,000 copies. The magazine was published in Uganda until Neogy was jailed in October, 1968.

Transition, founded in 1961, has long been looked on as Africa's most important English-language outlet both for African intellectuals and for foreign writers interested in Africa. In keeping with this reputation, the first Ghana-based issue included articles by Kenya political scientist Ali Mazrui, South African critic Lewis Nkosi, American novelist Paul Theroux and British journalist John de St. Jorre.

Detained After Issue

The government of former President Milton Obote of Uganda detained Neogy and Abu Mayanja, an opposition member of Parliament, two days after the appearance of the October, 1968, issue of Transition. The magazine had printed a letter from Mayanja in which according to the government, he implied that Obote had not appointed African judges to the high court because of tribal discrimination.

Although the letter was the main evidence later in the sedition trial of the two men, the government probably acted because it was generally fed up with the lively criticism of its magazine. A year earlier, for example, Transition published a long article by

1971, President Idi Amin appointed Mayanja minister of education.

After his release, Neogy began looking for a new African home for his magazine.

"It is a sad commentary on the state of affairs today," he wrote in the first Ghana-based issue, "that when faced with such a situation, the list of countries in Africa with democratic governments and constitutions that can play host to an international journal of opinion, becomes depressingly small."

"And we felt a Transition produced in Europe would be a confirmation, however temporary, that the independent press in Africa could only operate in exile."

Neogy chose Ghana, a country hardly friendly to the press during the regimes of former President Kwame Nkrumah and the army that ousted him. But Neogy says that the civilian government now running Ghana "actively believes in a free society and press."

The first issue of the new bimonthly Transition was dated June-July 1971. After its sellout, Neogy said he would increase future press runs to 20,000 copies.

Despite this popularity, Transition is not a financial success. It depends on the International Assn. for Cultural Freedom in Paris for financial support.